

VZCZCXRO8625
OO RUEHDE RUEHDIR
DE RUEHAD #1543 2590547
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 160547Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9706
RHMFIUU/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1220
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0377
RHBVAKS/COMUSNAVCENT

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 001543

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA; INR/NESA; INR/B;
RRU-NEA
IIP/G/NEA-SA
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: PETRAEUS REPORT

¶1. SUMMARY: The testimony of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker was widely followed and reported by local media, both print and broadcast. On the opinion/editorial side, Al-Khaleej viewed the General's report as an effort to avoid any decisions for the remainder of the President's term, and implicitly criticized both the U.S. and Arab states for allowing it to drag on. Al-Bayan considered the report an indication that "nothing new" is to be expected from Washington and concludes that the lesson of years of occupation is that Washington cares only about its interests and a broad national consensus of Iraqis on the future of their own country is the only hope. An op-ed writer in Al-Bayan believes that Washington has a choice: escape from Iraq through threats and war, vice dialogue, or an exit strategy to leave Iraq by engaging in dialogue with all factions in the region. End Summary.

¶2. Local media, print and broadcast, gave extensive coverage to the testimony of General David Petraeus and Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker, and to President Bush's speech on Iraq. Much of the coverage was taken directly from wires or assembled from wire reports by staff journalists. It was, on the whole, factual and objective reporting of the testimony, including various excerpts and highlights.

¶3. Under the headline "Occupations and Symptoms of Addiction", the editorial in Sharjah-based Arabic daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) 09/12 wrote:

"What Petraeus and the U.S. Ambassador in Iraq have recently said is a transparent attempt to circumvent any demand or any commitment to a programmed exit from Iraq, from now until the end of Bush's term."

"... Again we are afraid that the occupation of Iraq transforms into a state of addiction; an American addiction to practice it and an Arab addiction to be indifferent to what happens, much the way they reacted to the Zionist occupation of Palestine six decades ago..."

¶4. Under the headline "The Report to Make no Decisions", the editorial in Dubai-based Arabic daily "Al-Bayan" (circulation 85,000) 09/12 wrote:

"The Petraeus report indicates that there will be nothing new in Washington. Things will remain as they are in terms of dealing with the facts and complexities of the situation in Iraq. Past experience from years of occupation and daily Iraqi sufferings

confirm that a broad [Iraqi] national consensus is the only doorway to salvation, since Washington cares only about its interests when it makes decisions. Will Iraqis decide what serves their interests best?"

15. Under the headline "American Crisis in Iraq and its Escape Strategy", a political researcher and writer, Dr. Isam Salim Al-Shenti, wrote 09/13 in "Al-Bayan":

"The Petraeus report inferred that the security situation in Iraq will not be resolved without political and economic progress by the Iraqi government, and an Iraqi reconciliation that does not exclude any faction."

"The American administration, drowning in the new 'Vietnamese quagmire' in Iraq, must change its policy in the region if it wants to reach acceptable solutions inside and outside Iraq. What has been happening in the region, specifically in Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon in recent years, is in fact the product of the American administration's aggressive policy in an area still searching for security, stability and development."

"It is now in the American administration's hands. It can choose an exit strategy...by engaging in a dialogue with all concerned factions in the region; or an escape strategy using the language of threats and war instead of dialogue".

QUINN